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tween the kinsmen about the amount of property to be destroyed. 764
Once we saw the sons of a dead man tugging at two fine mats which his sister was folding into the cave. She wished to put them in but the sons opposed her, saying: 'Why should we spend all the mats? We have buried him, he is dead.'

It is held to be most important that earth should not touch the corpse's face, but once the cave has been closed the chief mourners each push a few handfuls of earth into the grave, the rest of the earth is filled in, and the dancers stamp it hard. Soon no sign of the grave remains.

(*b*) *The terror of death*

Death to the Nyakyusa is a fearful thing. They believe that the 761
spirit (*unsyuka*) of a dead man survives underground (*pasi*) in the 775
place of the shades (*ubusyuka*) and that it can and does visit sur- 765
viving relatives in dreams and materially affect their destinies. The shades of the dead are one of the final causes with which their religion deals. But contact with them is feared and the function of the ritual at the funeral is 'to drive the shade away'. This ritual begins during the burial (*ifwa*) and continues in a series of rites which last for a month or longer. At the burial itself people's attention is mainly concerned with the death as an emotional event, with the fact that a father, a mother, a kinsman or a neighbour has died; but into the emotional quality of death their religious beliefs enter. With the shades they desire no close contact, for the most usual dreams of the dead are those in which they reproach a man for some sin, or foretell his death; their commonest activity is believed to be the sending of madness and misfortune upon sinful men. Nor is it desirable to join the shades oneself. The place of the shades is a vague and shadowy land where no certain happiness is traditionally believed to be. 'No one', said an old man, 'has ever been there and come back to tell us about it. When the dead come to us in dreams they do not show us where they live nor tell us about their life. We do not know what we shall find there. But we do not think that we shall have happiness, or friendly intercourse.' 'He has died and we shall never meet again,' said another man of his dead neighbour. Some old men, however, have definite theories about the place of the spirits, and all agree that wealth is important there; but these theories have no certainty: 'We are just guessing.' It is certain that the dead continue to live somehow, for they are believed to affect

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761 765 775 the lives and enter the dreams of their kinsmen; but the nature of their survival is uncertain.

775 765 A man, when he dies, is believed to join his ancestors. Until the end of the funeral rites, they say, he is on the way and if the ritual is not properly performed he does not reach them, but troubles the dreams and lives of the survivors until he is properly driven away. 'If you do not perform the ritual for your father or mother you may go mad or else have a slow and lingering death.'

177 775 797 Many of the younger pagans, however, are affected by Christian belief. Young men spoke confidently of going after death 'to a fine country with dancing and feasting and a chief to rule us'. But many old men scoff at such beliefs. 'They have learnt them from the missionaries—how do they know, have they been there to see?' Among some of the younger men also the ritual of death is less important than it used to be. As one Christian said: 'The pagans no longer fear to die away from home—they used to fear very much to die in a strange country (and many still do), they thought: "If I die far from home I shall never reach my ancestors, for people will not bury me properly." Nor do all the young men now fear if they fail to attend a father's funeral ritual.' 'We no longer believe in the old rituals,' said a sophisticated young pagan, 'because we see that the Christians do not do these things and nothing happens to them.'

761 753 754 An additional reason for fearing death is the Nyakyusa belief in the contagious character of many diseases. Death is thought to be caused sometimes by witchcraft, and sometimes by one of a variety of diseases. Of these diseases some are held to be hereditary and to run in families, and they are usually non-contagious; others, and they are usually contagious, are believed to be due to the sorcery of enemies. And the contagion is thought to be spread by an autopsy. It is especially dangerous to relatives; other people do not fear these diseases unless they actually hold the corpse in their arms, or dig the grave, or help to bury it, but all relatives are afraid.

764 Besides the contagion of specific diseases, the corpse itself is held always to have a vaguely defined, but none the less fearful, contagion of its own. And, because of this, all who have had any close contact with the body go to bathe immediately after the burial. Those of the chief mourners who hold the body in their arms, the grave-diggers and those who get down into the grave to bury it, all go to bathe. 'Even when death is no due to a contagious disease

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it seems as if there was another disease in the corpse itself, it is a stinking mass of disease.' Traditionally they use two medicinal plants to wash with, but in some chiefdoms near mission stations they now wash without them. The chief of one such country explained: 'In the old days they feared very much to eat before bathing—but now sometimes they just wash their hands and eat. Of old they feared death, they feared lest the disease should spread, they wished to rid themselves of the contamination of the corpse. They used to wash with two plants—as medicine. Now they just bathe in the stream or sometimes only just wash their hands.' But, particularly in chiefdoms at a distance from the centres of European influence, the fear of the contagion of death is still very strong.

Death then is, for the majority of pagan Nyakyusa, a fearful as well as a grievous event; less fearful than it used to be to their fathers, but more fearful by far to them than it is to their Christian neighbours.

(c) *The sacrifice*

At all except the very poorest burials one or more head of cattle are killed. Cows are provided whenever possible, but, if no cows are available, bulls may be used instead. If the man who has died left cattle of his own, one at least of his herd is killed; if he has left none, his family make every effort to buy or borrow one, or else they provide one themselves from their own herds. If the dead man was rich, several of his cows will be killed. If his senior son has cattle of his own, he should kill one for his father (*ikumbamba*) and if there are a number of grown-up sons the senior of each group of full brothers will offer a cow.

Not only the immediate family of a dead man but also the fathers (or brothers) of his wives and the husbands of his full sisters and daughters are expected to provide cows for killing at his burial, and if he is buried at his 'father's' place then his 'father's' affinal relatives also are expected to bring cattle or cloths. When a married woman dies, her husband and her own 'father' are expected each to provide a cow or a bull. Occasionally other affines of her husband bring calves, but less usually. More cattle are killed for men than for women. For a young child nothing is killed.

The cattle are killed either by the dead man's 'father' or by his heir; if a woman has died, then by her husband. At a man's burial

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764 *ifi fikusoka kukyeni nunyambala bo basyuka, bo baputile abasyuka tukubakaga: lenga tukanyaguvila tukubopa ikigili! Abasyuka bo bakasokaga bikujamo; papo lenga tumalile po basokile munda. Loli bikwandesya kangi tukuja nabo bwila!*)
842 What we do comes from the shades and from Kyala himself. The
831 blood is theirs and his together. Those who create (*ukubumba*) a child say: 'I am just eating at a woman,' but Kyala creates a child! If Kyala and the shades do not 'cook' [i.e. do not cause desire] you will do nothing, the penis is flaccid, but if Kyala has 'cooked' then you really do something, your heart (*indumbula*) is full of desire. Always the shades are there and we drive them away, they are there and we drive them away. . . .

775 A shade is resurrected in the body of his child (*Unsyuka ikusyuka itolo mumbeli gwa mwanake*). . . .

764 Passing the basket of pumpkin-seeds, millet, and lentils between the
775 legs and on to the head and throwing to one side means: 'Here between the legs there is work, may they go out in intercourse, and from the head where we dream, may they go out also.' Because in the ritual we say: 'Let them come into the body' at first, then we drive them away. Rubbing ourselves in the earth and passing millet between the legs means: 'May they come';[1] throwing millet and so on to one side it is to drive them away, that they may go out.

QUESTION: Which shade do you drive away?

MWANDISI: He who has just died, we drive him away.

QUESTION: What about the first ancestor?

MWANDISI: He is there at their place [the place of the shades], we drove him away long ago, he just receives him [the newly deceased].

QUESTION: Why the pumpkin-seeds in the bananas?

MWANDISI: It is the semen (*ulukungu*) for begetting children. . . .

QUESTION: Do the shades always come when a man dies?

MWANDISI: Yes, they always come, they receive their fellow. Yes, even though he has died from sorcery they come and receive him, and even though he has died from witchcraft they come, the shades receive him, and if it is from illness he has died they also come. There is no
● [761] death without the shades, they always come to receive their fellow.

When the witches have 'eaten' someone the shades come to receive
764 him. No, the witches eat him alone, but the shades receive him. Some-
775 one may get up in the morning and say: 'I dreamed they ate me and I
763 was with the shades!' Then he is about to die. Sometimes someone
828 dreams and says: 'In the night I was in the land of the shades with so-and-so, I left him there, I escaped myself and came home.' Then his friend is about to die.

764 If you do not perform the ritual you go mad (*kukyembela ikigili*) or
775 perhaps you get very thin, and are unable to die, you are ailing and do

[1] i.e. the participants identify themselves with the deceased.

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QUESTION: The water dripping from the little hut?

MWASALEMBA: If we omit this then the children when young don't go mad, but they vomit a watery fluid, and people say that we have not performed the ritual of water for them.

QUESTION: The meaning of leaves and fruit of bananas?

MWASALEMBA: Yes, it is because those who run mad throw away their clothes and wear leaves. So in the ritual we make them wear leaves; we think that if we don't do this they will have the madness and throw away their clothes. The leaves of plantain belong to the man (the father), those of sweet banana to the woman (the mother). They signify the completion of the ritual, both of their father and of their mother. We make them wear both kinds of leaf, even if one parent is still alive, because they begot them together, their blood is one, the man's blood and the woman's blood. The plantain fruit which they insert in the leaves in front is the procreative power of the father, it is like his penis; the sweet banana which they insert behind is the fertility of the mother, it is like a bark-cloth. We throw them away in the water so that they may float away, it is a sign of death; the blood of our parents which was one is finished now!

QUESTION: The leaves on the neck?

MWASALEMBA: When they run mad people do this, they wear leaves on head and neck.

QUESTION: The stones on the head, in ears, mouth and fingers?

MWASALEMBA: That is a symbol of death. Does not the corpse resemble a stone? It neither speaks nor hears; it does not hoe, or work with its hands at all. He whom we have buried is like a stone. We throw his death away into the stream.

QUESTION: The little hut?

MWASALEMBA: That is for cooking food in; we don't cook for him [the dead man] in the house because we did not bury him there but outside, so we cook for him outside. . . . We grind millet in the doorway [778] because the doorway belongs to the shade. We say: 'Receive us, oh shade, since a person has died, receive us!' Because if we enter into the house we are with the shade, and when we come out we are with him, the doorway is the shade's (*ikifigo kya nsyuka*). It is like the pouring of water on the thatch; when we have come from bathing, we enter and come out again, the doorway is the shade's. And at other times, if someone is ill and the shade has been brooding over him, he stands in the doorway and prays to the shade (*ikumputa unsyuka*). Yes, when a man dies the shade broods over (*ikutobatela*) us living.

QUESTION: Does death come from the shades? [761] 763

MWASALEMBA: Yes, when I have lain down at night, in the morning I tell my children: 'So-and-so and so-and-so came to me, I have eaten their food, they came to carry me off.' Then there is sickness and they say: 'The shades have brooded over you, you will die.' It is death in-

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byre or strike a beast with a stick 'until the twins had grown up' (an elastic phrase), 'but if he has no sons to milk a doctor comes and gives him a medicine to drink in the house, then he can milk the cows outside. To enter the byre is altogether taboo.' He and his attendant during his seclusion drink the milk of one cow only, which has been specially treated. All his wives avoid milk until the end of the ritual and the mother of twins herself 'can only begin to clean the byre after she has borne at least one other child'—some say two or three other children. If a cow is given her for milk (after the end of the ritual) it is taboo for others to share that milk. If these taboos are broken it is said that the cattle will purge and die, or their legs will swell.

It is also taboo for a parent of twins to pass behind people—he (or she) must always pass in front. 'They fear that if he passes behind, he (the parent) will always have twins.'

Twins, and their parents who have been through the full ritual, are thereafter immune from the danger of twin birth and may even go in to greet a mother of twins—Mwakobela's sister, who herself had borne twins, entered his wife's seclusion hut. There are, however, two or three taboos which apply to twins in later life. It is taboo for one of a pair of twin girls to get married without the other. Angombwike explained:

> If a man comes wooing the first he must do it secretly, and when he speaks to her father he must do it secretly, he may bring cows but no one knows about it; if it becomes known they say the younger might curse herself (*ukwibuna*) and die. Then when another has come wooing the other, secretly, the father tells them both to come wooing openly *on the same day*. They come with cows. Then the father summons all his children, and the twin girls, and tells them: 'These men have come to marry you, do you like them?' And he asks the elder (*mbasa*): 'Which do you like?' She chooses. Even if she chooses the man who came for her sister he must accept, and if he tries to protest people will hush him up at once, for it is the custom for the elder to get married first. Then the younger (*musindeka*) says she likes the other one and their father takes the cattle. If either one is wooed secretly before the other she must stay quietly at home till a wooer comes for her sister. If she did not (whichever way it happened) the other might die. It is common knowledge in the boys' village here that of X's twin daughters a lover has only come for the younger, none for the elder. And so both are still unmarried.

Twins and their parents, the fearful ones (*abipasya*), and other people who have been treated with medicines, eat first-fruits of

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V. CAUSES OF MISFORTUNE

761 (*a*) *The death of Katasya*

[128] The following account of the death of Katasya is quoted in full because it illustrates how several possible causes of misfortune were considered. Possible causes mentioned were:

(a) The anger of his junior kinsmen
(b) The witchcraft of his wives
(c) The anger of his shades
(d) The anger of his neighbours because he had given them too small a cut of a bull killed as a sacrifice to his shades
(e) The adultery of his son with three of his wives
(f) The sorcery of his half-brother's son, Mwamukinga, with whom there was a long-standing quarrel over inheritance and whom he had accused of killing his (Mwamukinga's) full brother
(g) The sorcery of the Chief Mwaihojo, for Katasya, a man of the neighbouring Chief Mwaipopo, had built and cultivated on land claimed by both Mwaihojo and Mwaipopo

Record of G. W., 4/1/38

761 Angombwike told me at midday that Katasya had died. He was a village headman of Mwaipopo, the fellow of Mwainyopolela. His case (*inongwa*) was thus:

782 The millet did not grow in his field, so he called all his children to his homestead and killed a big bull for them, saying: 'Perhaps my children are angry at home. Perhaps my wives have worked witchcraft.' But to the neighbours he gave one leg and the children at home ate the rest. He did not, however, live long. He died immediately. It is said that the meat is still there. They have not eaten it. Such is the case of his death.

Kasitile, when I called on him yesterday, was out and his wife said he had gone to see Katasya who was ill.

Later in the day—4.1.38. Likusyila came in and I asked about Katasya's death.

[787] But he has not died, he is still just alive. We heard that the millet failed in his field and the maize and beans in all his gardens. They all failed. One of his wives went into a trance repeatedly. She said: 'Those beneath are angry. Seek a bull and kill it.' Then he sought one, but 761 now they have killed him. Perhaps he stinted his fellows in the village 578 of meat, because if a man kills his animal alone and his fellows hear

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that he has killed, they are astonished and say: 'He should have called us. Does he perform ritual alone?'

QUESTION: But why were those beneath angry in the first place? They are not angry without cause.

LUKUSYILA: Indeed, they are never angry without cause. There is always some wrong. But we do not know what it is in this case. If you do not kill cattle for your father's burial they are always angry. But we do not know what wrong Katasya committed to make them angry.

Later Mwanifu came in. He told me that Katasya is still alive, but perhaps he will die this evening. We do not speak with him. He is just breathing. We only ask his wives: 'Does he sleep?' The case is thus: the millet failed in his field and he said: 'I shall pray to my shades and it will grow again.' Then he went to a certain man to get his big bull and gave him a cow in calf, saying: 'Take this and give me your bull,' and later they will give him a little calf worth 30s. The bull was very big. He killed it. Before he did so he was already slightly ill, but when he had killed it the illness became very much worse. We say they have bewitched him because he stinted his fellows in the village. But they themselves deny it, saying: 'But we always kill and eat ourselves alone. I, Mwainyopolela, killed my animal and ate it alone. Have I died therefore? According to the custom, if I have killed my beast as a sacrifice (*jakwiputela*) then I give my fellows one leg.'

QUESTION: Did Katasya not do so?

MWANIFU: No, Katasya did not give them any. He ate alone. Some wise men give the chief the breast because the chief is the owner of the country. Katasya did not give him that. Yes, if someone dies then the chief is usually given the breast. But when a beast is killed for sacrifice, no one having died, then many eat by themselves. The mourner gives to the chief.

QUESTION: Did he inquire of a diviner or not?

MWANIFU: We do not know. Some inquire of a diviner. Some think for themselves that the fathers are shaking them. Concerning his death, we are only speculating, saying: 'Perhaps they have bewitched him. They were angry on account of the meat.' But perhaps it is sorcery. See, he was sweating very much on his face. Let him die. We will look in his belly. Perhaps he has been speared. They have bewitched him. Perhaps it is sorcery. We only speculate.

In the morning Mwaipopo (the chief) was very, very angry. He said: 'Why have you gathered together, you people? Go off home. Do you want to finish off a dying man? It is taboo to gather together. First let a man die, then come to lament the death.'

QUESTION: Is it a Nyakyusa custom to be angry if people gather together at a sick man's house? Is it as if they bewitch him?

MWANIFU: Yes.

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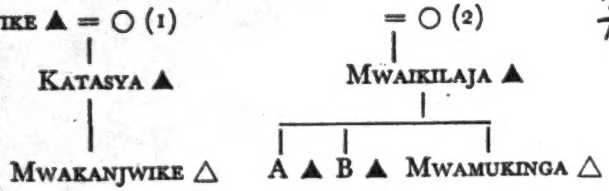

Mwaikilaja, the son of the junior wife, inherited, because when their father, Mwakyandwike, died, Katasya, the son of the senior wife, was a child. Mwamukinga is accused of killing Katasya by sorcery.

Mwakwelebeja came in to take me to the funeral of Katasya. 'It is 764
not the day of burial to-day, but the day of war. On the day of burial they weep very much and it does not go well (*jikanoga*) but to-day it will be well performed.' He was eager and excited at the prospect of good dancing. 'The chief Mwabuga from Masoko, his son-in-law, is coming. He is coming with his drums. The people of Masoko dance well.' At first I refused to go, but he would take no refusal. 'You must come,' he insisted, so finally I went.

On the way we discussed the cause of death. Some say the witches 761
have eaten him. They say that Mwainyopolela is angry on account of the meat. Some say it is the sorcery of Mwaihojo (the chief) because Katasya (a man of Chief Mwaipopo) hoed a big area in the disputed ground. He built a temporary hut and lived there. But we say no. If they had roused up a war between the witches, would they not have gone to Mwakagile (Chief Mwaipopo) and his fellows? But we have not done that. We argue and say: 'Why are you taking our country?' but we are only fighting with words.

QUESTION: The war of the witches?

MWAKWELEBEJA: Yes, the war when they call the witches of a chief- 754
dom by night to fight against those of another chiefdom. But Katasya 721
was indeed wrong to stint his neighbours in Busikali of meat. If he had 689
been wise he would have given them a leg. Mwainyopolela is very generous. Always when he kills a beast he shares the meat with his fellows.

We arrived at the funeral. The women were packed together under a 764
tree to the left, where they had sat with the corpse yesterday. The girls and young women stood watching the dance and occasionally strolling rhythmically out into the midst of it. The errant son was with the other men to-day. The son-in-law from Masoko came with all his cattle (seven cows, one bull and five calves) of which one will be killed and the others returned. The bull was unusually large with an enormous hump and it caused comment. It was well known. They told each other how, when his father, Mwakabulwa, died, this bull was quiescent. It did not move about at all, and it was a very small calf. It was quiescent

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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were killed by a tree, who were killed in war, by lightning, by lion or leopard, I call you all to come; and whosoever has been forgotten, let him come. I pray to you all, let my dog be well, let him lie down in peace. He is the saliva of God. O God, be merciful, and turn back the disease."

The beer that he brought and laid on the ground before him, is now poured into the palms of little children, who drink it in that way. If a flesh offering is also made, it is laid down in small pieces, and each ancestor is named as his portion is laid down. When ants come out to feast on it, it is known that the spirits have accepted the offering, and all present run away lest the spirits should work evil upon them.

Little children are affectionately referred to as dogs, especially when they commit a fault, which the father apologizes for. "How can you be angry with the little one? He has no more sense of what is fitting than a dog." But to call a person a dog in any other connection is a great insult, and must be atoned for. Spitting on a person is another insult, but when done ceremonially, it is believed to have great virtue, and is no doubt connected with the idea of the "Spittle of God" referred to above.

If the sick person does not recover, the fault is not in the system. Some mistake has been made, the diviner is unskilful, his wife is "unclean," or some other cause prevents the expected result from following; for, when the proper ceremonies have been performed, the patient recovers. But a final cause of failure is always kept in hand; it is the will of God

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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761 that the sick man should die, and there is nothing more that can be done. Numerous instances have been cited to me of recovery of sick persons when all had been correctly performed; and scepticism on the subject was received with almost incredulous amazement. And there is no reason to doubt that in many cases recovery did follow; for the conviction in the mind of the patient that the wrath of the offended spirit had been averted, would, according to modern ideas of psychology, have a healing effect also upon his body.

753 782 Smallpox is the disease most dreaded by the people, and its approach was accompanied with most elaborate ceremonies. The subject is dealt with again under "Witchcraft" and "Medicine." It might come either through the action of the spirits or through [787] witchcraft. In either case its approach is foreseen by the *abakunguluka* (prophets) in dreams, and the chief and his subordinates go to the grave of the ancestors, and there, by night, a black ram is killed. The lungs and liver are roasted, and laid in little heaps on the grave, each ancestor being named as his portion is laid down, and prayer is offered:

> "Ye fathers, look upon us in mercy. Drive away from us this plague, lest our children die, and none be left in the land. Send it to the Basango or the Basafwa, but save us. Pray to God for us. Hear, O God, the words of those we have named. And go to the west, O God, or to the Basango."

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CHAPTER XXIV

Death & Burial

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AMONG the Konde, as among other Bantu peoples, no man dies "unwept, unhonoured, or unsung." However contemptible he may have been in life, he has now passed to a sphere in which he is clothed with fresh powers, which, for good or ill, he can direct upon his living descendants, who take care to give no cause of offence. He cannot, however, punish them for any evil they may have done him while alive; only *post mortem* sins can be visited upon them: neglect of ceremonies, refusal of beer at the funeral, omission of his name when prayer is made, and other tokens of forgetfulness. And the power for harm of each spirit is limited to his own descendants; but chiefs, naturally, can bring misfortune upon the whole of the community over which they ruled in life.

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Immediately a man has died, his eldest child, son or daughter, unless an infant, begins the mourning.

"Alas, my father, I too have met trouble!" Then the women, "Ah! trouble comes to you as to others." Next the leader, "My father, my lion, my leopard," naming all the strong and fierce animals to which the dead man is compared; the women say, "Now indeed you are poor"; and the boy replies, "Yes, my

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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766 made that the chief is dead. The body is brought to the grave by the headmen, and the dead cow is
643 lowered in first; then the chief, in a sitting position,
622 facing the Sango country, if that was his original home. Torches are used if the night is dark. When the grave is filled in, all partake of the medicine made from the dead man's nails and hair. The washing ceremonies are the same as for common men; but the widows will not go near the men who placed the body in the grave until the latter have given them a gift of some kind, though the exact function of the gift is not clear.

643 No chief of any importance dies a natural death: that is to say, however and whenever a chief dies, it is
•761 assumed that some one was responsible. It is believed that chiefs die more easily than common men, and are more open to evil influences; but, on the other hand, they have more powerful medicines to protect them. When Kabeta died in 1922, all his sons and his headmen were put to the poison test, and those who did not vomit were compelled to pay a fine in cattle, a token that complete confidence in the belief in evil influences is passing away; for in earlier times the culprit so discovered would have been attacked as he ran, and would probably have paid the forfeit of his own life. The easier punishment may, however, have been due to fear of the police.

766 Twins were not exposed; but if one of them died, the body was cast into the bush, and wailing was not permitted, for it would cause the death of the other. To-day the body of a twin is buried in the ordinary way, but without wailing.

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769 643 were not ill, they were not troubled as we are. For later in the evening, while the Lwembe was still alive, the commoner priests removed his nails and hair; they came near and plucked them off. He shouted: 'Who is snatching at me?' They replied: 'No one', and then they smothered him with cloth in the nostrils and in the anus, and he went away [i.e. he died]. . . . They did it only when he had initiated it himself by saying: 'I have eaten food in the land of the shades'; they [775] did not begin it themselves. . . . They collected the relics in a little bamboo flask, and a priest treated them so that Lwembe might not go away with the food to the land of the shades, that the fertility of the soil (*ilifugo*), this *ifingila*, might always remain above.

[778] These relics, the hair and the nails, were held to be magically connected through their growth with the growth of crops.

While the Lwembe lived he was secluded—ordinary men did 643 not see him—and he was subject to numerous taboos. For example, [784] he might not tread in water lest the country should be flooded; he never bathed in a stream (as Nyakyusa men do daily) and was carried across any river when travelling; he must not sit on a green banana leaf lest the bananas in the country should fail, but was always provided with a skin to sit upon, and he ate only the middle portion of a banana throwing away the ends for 'if he finished the whole of a banana he would create hunger in the country'. No one might grasp his hand, or drink out of the same calabash as he, save the priests of his own age; if he drank from a calabash when travelling he took it with him, for 'if he left it behind he left hunger in that place'.

The selection of the Lwembe was in the hands of the hereditary priests of Lubaga and the hereditary Kinga priests, who come from BuKinga to sacrifice at Lubaga. The man they choose must be of good character—at the time we were in BuNyakyusa the only willing candidate was rejected because 'he is a bad man, a thief, they refuse to have a thief as priest'—he must exhibit in his own home the power of fertility. 'They don't catch just anyone, but [842] one with children, and cattle, and fertility of the fields in his own homestead. If the man taken as chief is not fertile and rich there will be many sterile people in the homesteads, and much disease and hunger.'

When the priests had decided upon the man of their choice, they seized him and set him upon a sacred skin and a pad of leaves; and it was believed that once he had been set thereon he [761] would die if he refused office; tales were told of a younger brother

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(28) of Mwampondele (27) who had fled from the stool and had died. 643 [76]

The chosen man was secluded in a hut, lying on a litter with his priests, who kept him company (*ukumpanja*), just as a nubile girl is secluded and lies on a litter with her maids, or a young chief with his village headmen at his 'coming out'. Here is the account of Mwasesi, the oldest of the priests of Lubaga (a man of about seventy-five) who saw the installation of the last Lwembe, Mwakisisya (56).

A skin and a head-pad of leaves (*ingata*)[1] are brought by the Kinga. The priests catch the chief and set him on these; and then he cannot run away, it is taboo. I, Mwasesi, would sit on one side of him and my friend on the other, and force him to sit on them. Then we plead with him and say: 'You are the Lion, the Leopard, the Snake, the Banana, the Bean, the Millet, the Cow Pea, and the Lentil.' (Lentils are very important, you know, because it is with them that we celebrate the ritual, and with cow peas.) Then, after a time, he says: 'Leave me', and he goes to find the cow; this cow is just for the priests to eat that night. Then we take him into a certain house, cut leaves and spread them for a litter; and we keep him company there on the litter for some time. Then he sends messages to Mwakyusa (38), to Mwankyuse (33), and to Mwakisambe (30), and the Kinga [i.e. their descendants]. Each chief who is Lwembe's descendant sends commoner priests . . . they gather to induct him into Lubaga, he who was in the house. It is just like the 'coming out' ritual for a young chief. 643 788

The Lwembe in his own person, and in a lesser degree his 'sons' who are ordinary chiefs, are identified with the power of growth. Not only must the Lwembe not die with the breath still in his body, or with his hair and nails still upon it, but when he is chosen the priests test whether his reign will be long or short (perhaps whether they can permit him to live or not) by taking a little millet, putting it in a banana leaf and watching to see whether it sprouts or not. 'If it sprouts and grows at once he will live long; if it does not, he will be the priest [i.e. divine king] but will die very soon.' 643 [787]

Because the power of making rain, food, milk and children lay in the body of the Lwembe he was fearful and terrible. 'No one built close to him, it was taboo, no one touched Mwakisisya (56) . . . if he wished to make it rain he would make it rain all 643 784

[1] The Kinga priests spoke of a cloth to wear and a stool and an axe which were kept in the inner part of the hut of the Lwembe's great wife and which no man, save a priest of Lubaga, might see.

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643 separate inheritance sometimes went through the ritual because he might later be required as a chief, and the son of a conquered chief who had retained limited authority over a small area might be permitted to 'come out' with his senior brothers also. The common pattern, then, was for two sons to 'come out' as principals, but for a variety of reasons one or more 'younger brothers' might join them.

In Ngonde, as opposed to BuNyakyusa, several brothers normally went through the ritual as principals and the reason given us was that power should be distributed. They would say, we were told, 'If we bring out only two they will be boastful and ill-use their people, let them be many therefore, then, if a man has a quarrel with his chief, he can flee to another. . . .' In BuNyakyusa [622] any tendency to tyranny in a chief was effectively curbed by his village headmen; but it is possible that headmen never had as much power in Ngonde as they did in BuNyakyusa.

An analysis of the genealogies of Nyakyusa chiefs shows that very often one half-brother lost power to the other, but occasionally several brothers (e.g. seven sons of Mwaipopo 26) got independent chiefdoms, and a junior brother (e.g. Mwakyusa 38) [669] might attract a larger following of men than his seniors. Mwakyusa led his men from the hills to the more fertile plain and drove out the Kyungu of Ngonde from the lake-shore north of the Songwe river.

The 'coming out' was traditionally the occasion when authority was handed over by the elder generation to the younger. The old [761] chief retired and he was *expected to die shortly*. In Nyakyusa theory he died because his men no longer loved him: 'A chief did not [888] live long after the "coming out" of his sons; he died because there was war and people would complain: "He is too old, when we fight we are beaten, he had better die, perhaps the heir will help us." He died of the "breath of men".' But, as will be shown, his headmen had the duty of smothering a chief who seemed likely to die, and they were much more ready to do this after the 'coming out' of his sons than before. It was right that the sons should come out before their father's death, but not right that the period of regency should be extended, for the division of authority between old and young was uneasy. When the old chief did die his [793] headmen became the priests (*abapaga*) responsible for the sacri- [622] fices in his grove, and the young men were solely responsible for the defence of the country and the administration of justice.

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the shades and the hearths which was stressed; in Porokoto's country people talked mostly of the witches; but it seemed clear that both conceptions were present when men murmured: 'The hearth bricks are bad' (*amafigo mabibi*) and they sought to cleanse them by clearing out the old fire and lighting new. 'To clear out the ashes means they take away all that dirt, the dirt which the witches have brought and the shades; it is the cause of illness.' When witches are thought to be active there is also a public complaint, and a public warning is given 'to whom it may concern' to desist.[1] This occurred in the ritual after the ground hornbill had eaten the chicken. Above all, men must admit their anger to one another: 'they fight that the homesteads may be peaceful'. The theme so familiar in Nyakyusa rituals—that quarrels must be confessed if they are to be composed—recurs yet again. Though we distinguish the rituals for 'cleansing the country' from sacrifices, on the ground that the whole community participates in the 'cleansing' while the sacrifice is esoteric, the two are closely linked, and a sacrifice commonly precedes or follows the cleansing. We turn now to the detailed accounts of celebrations for 'cleansing' in Ngonde and among the Kukwe.

(*a*) THE RATS

In Ngonde they used to clear out the ashes at the new year, at the first hoeing (in December) after 'the break of the rains'. They feared that death and disease would spread through the land if they continued living with the old fires, that the shades in the earth, both the shades of chiefs and of commoners, would be angry. Let them drive the shades away and hoe in peace. They always remembered to do so each new year; for the old men used to keep these things in mind continually, they never forgot. The Kyungu would summon the whole country to clear out the ashes; and then they would hoe in peace. And at other times, too, if prophecy came on someone, they would clear out the ashes again. 'It is to drive away the shade with the sickness that he brings. We throw out the ashes and firebrands because he has come to warm himself over the fire in our houses, we throw out the pots and winnowing baskets because he has come to see us eating; let him go there (to the grove) and eat what he asked for—we say the shades ask for food—let him eat hens, perhaps a sheep. We say the shades bring sickness to the fire, hence we throw out the ashes and make new fire with a drill.'

The nobles of Ngonde approached the Kyungu and he gave

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 109-13.

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killed that the dead man may be received by the shades of his lineage, and his immediate kin eat *ihipiki* medicines with him for the last time, is marked.

Marriages and funerals, and in a lesser degree births, are occasions for gatherings of kinsmen in Western society—such a penetrating study of kinship as *The Forsyte Saga* bears adequate witness to this—but the gathering of kinsfolk is a ceremonial rather than a ritual.[1] The attendance of the Forsyte men at Aunt Ann's burial service is in no way essential to the service, though it is felt to be a mark of respect and 'proper' feeling' on their part to come. So also at Nyakyusa Christian funerals, the attendance of relatives and fellow villagers is conventional—people are shocked if they do not come—but the peace of the departed is not thought to depend upon his kinsmen killing cows at his grave and celebrating the 'farewell'; the ritual element is the concern of his fellow Christians, led by the priest or elder, irrespective of kinship connexions. The conventions are binding, however. Though a kinsman or village neighbour is not accused of having killed his fellow if he fails to come to the funeral, nevertheless it would cause offence if he did not come, being free to do so, and should he go to work in the fields on the day of the funeral of a grown man, a neighbour, his position would be intolerable.

At a Christian funeral the emphasis all through is on resurrection and life. The hymns sung to comfort the mourners and the prayers and words of the burial service stress resurrection: 'This corruption has put on incorruption, this mortality immortality' . . . 'the body of the flesh is buried, but the body of the spirit rises.' . . . 'Our friend is not dead but liveth.' . . . 'Oh death where is thy sting, oh grave (*lupaka*) where is thy victory?' And the weeping, though extravagant to English ears, is much more restrained than among pagans. Again and again we were told by Christians: 'We do not fear death as the pagans do', and certainly fear is not played up as in the pagan ritual. As one Christian put it: 'No Christian smears himself with mud; only the pagans fear very much at a death, they are desolate, but we do not fear, we say: "Indeed I shall die, but I shall rise again", so we do not smear ourselves with mud and grieve very much. . . . We say: "Why mud? We shall meet with him above."' And there is no later shaving or other purification, for the mourners are not identified with the corpse.

[1] For a discussion of this distinction, cf. *op. cit.*, p. 9.